

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 11, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Daniel Ashe  
Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street NW Room 3331  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell and Director Ashe:

We write to you regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) current Mexican Wolf Recovery Program and the Service's potential updates to that plan. The Service has utilized the same recovery plan for the Mexican wolf since the early 1980's and has failed to update the plan to include recovery data as required by federal law. As a result, this plan is significantly outdated and is not based on the best science available. Without an updated plan including recovery criteria, the Mexican wolf could remain on the endangered species list indefinitely.

While we do not support the current recovery plan, we are equally concerned with regard to a potential new plan. It is our understanding that the Service may seek to introduce the Mexican wolf into areas outside of its historic range as part of a new recovery program for the species. We hereby express our unified position opposing such actions by the Service.

The complete lack of consideration for the historical habitat of the Mexican wolf is a terminal defect in the current recovery plan. Any new proposal must include consideration of potential negative impacts. Population planning must encompass a thorough understanding of the wolf's historic range. Instead, it appears that the Service plans to rely on one-size-fits-all recovery metrics that do not properly address vital factors, such as the ability for the native prey-base to sustain the desired level of wolves.

Despite the fact that 90% of the Mexican wolf's historic range is in Mexico, the Service seems committed to restoring Mexican wolves only in the United States. It defies common sense that a species recovery plan would fail to account for 90% of that species' original habitat. Without coordinated and robust efforts to restore the Mexican wolf in Mexico, any "recovery" plan is doomed to fail in the United States. Furthermore, planning the recovery of a single species within a habitat in which it has no historical presence sets a dangerous precedent for future recovery efforts.

Historical evidence does not show that Mexican wolves traditionally occupied any territory north of I-40. This means that any "recovery" efforts planned for Utah, Colorado, and the northern parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas would not be based on scientific evidence. We strongly oppose any efforts to "restore" the Mexican wolf to areas outside its historical habitat. The potential for adverse impacts to native species and local communities from such actions requires additional caution. As a result, the local stakeholders most impacted by the Mexican wolf recovery program should be intimately involved in this process.

As you seek to update the recovery program for the Mexican wolf, we expect that the Service will, at minimum, do the following: work with states and local stakeholders to develop the new recovery plan, set achievable recovery goals that have a specific target number, and establish these goals in 90% of the wolf's historic habitat in Mexico. Furthermore, any new proposals must utilize a binational plan, use the best available science as required under federal law, and ensure any scientists working on this effort are without bias. Lastly, any proposal should address on-the-ground conflicts between the Mexican wolf and other wildlife, livestock, and people, and prohibit the recovery zone outside the species' historical range from expanding into areas outside its historic range.

In combination with the letter sent by the Governors of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, we appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



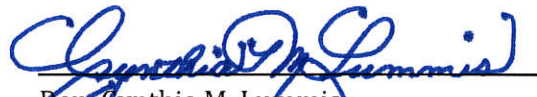
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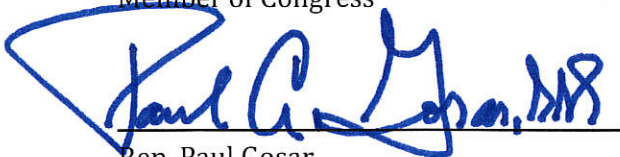
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Member of Congress



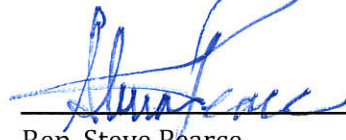
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